

## **STATEMENT FROM THE FEDERAL CIRCUIT AND FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA**

*There are a range of reasons that orders are made that involve the use contact centres. It may be for assisting with the safe change-over of a child from one parent to another parent, for supervised time between a parent and child, or for the re-introduction of a parent with a child.*

*The cases in our system are very complex. Through sophisticated risk assessment methods and sharing of information with police and child protection, the Courts have access to critical information about parties and children involved in proceedings and the various risks. This information assists with informed decisions around the safety and best interests of children who are subject of proceedings.*

*Most orders that involve the use of contact centres are made by consent between the parties and are usually made at an interim stage of the case where one of the parties (or the Independent Children's Lawyer) has sought the orders in their Application.*

*When made early in a case at an interim hearing, evidence has generally not been able to be properly tested, and supervised time can be ordered to mitigate risk to children. Such orders are generally made for a limited period of time and are not necessarily used on an ongoing basis, unless there are protective reasons for doing so.*

*For appropriate cases, supervision is intended to create a safe environment for children to spend time with a parent while mitigating risks of physical and emotional harm, noting that 91% of parenting cases in our Courts have 1 or more major risk factors alleged (such as allegations of family violence, child abuse, serious mental health and substance misuse issues), and 69% of our parenting cases have 4 or more major risk factors alleged.*